

Minority Health Initiative 2013-2015 Technical Assistance Questions and Answers

Question 1

In the 'Use of Funds' section on page 6, the top criterion states that "Funds cannot be used to directly subsidize individuals for the cost of health care..." Can funds be used to fund health screening supplies and the time associated with conducting direct health screenings, for example, blood sugar testing or A1C testing?

Answer 1

Yes, costs for health screening supplies and related time are allowable. Projects need to ensure they are meeting their work plan objectives and outcomes and being strategic in addressing their target audience(s).

Question 2

How is "unintentional injury" defined?

Answer 2

Unintentional injuries are defined as those that are not inflicted by deliberate means, i.e. not on purpose. Unintentional injury categories include drowning, falls, fires/ burns, poisonings, unintentional suffocation, and motor vehicle related injuries and deaths.

Question 3

Where can I find minority population data based on the new Congressional District boundaries for Sarpy County?

Answer 3

The U.S. Census will release detailed 2010 census data on the new Congressional Districts (based on the 112th Congress) in June 2013. For the purposes of applications in response to this RFA, please use the following data: Hispanic: 7,431, Non-Hispanic Black: 4,012, Non-Hispanic American Indian: 332, Non-Hispanic Asian: 1,604, Non-Hispanic Pacific Islander: 123.

Question 4

I just received an update on your RFA, and wanted to clarify that this grant does not cover our service area, Douglas County?

Answer 4

You are correct. Minority Health Initiative funds are not available for Douglas County. One World Community Health Center and Charles Drew Community Health Center are appropriated funds by the Nebraska legislature to serve minority populations in that county.

Question 5

Is there a page limit for the Project Narrative (III in outline?)

Answer 5

No, though the application is limited to 30 pages, not including attachments.

Question 6

Are the Letters of Intent considered in the realm of public information and will a list of organizations submitting a LOI be shared?

Answer 6

Yes, this is public information. Please see the link on this page for a list of Letters of Intent received.

Question 7

Is more than one letter of partnership allowed?

Answer 7

Yes. Multiple letters of partnership are allowed if you are working with more than one other organization. Please remember the letters need to be of commitment (not just support) and include signatures of both parties, details of the contribution each partner will make to the project and the dollars allocated for that purpose(s).

Question 8

In the RFA in states to travel to an Assistance Technical Meeting that will be within 50 miles of designated area and to budget for that amount. Being from Scottsbluff County we need to travel sometimes all the way to Lincoln, Kearney, or Grand Island. Would it be possible to budget for a higher amount for per diem, lodging, and gas expenses due to farther distance to travel?

Answer 8

The RFA states, on page 16, “**Annual Technical Assistance Meetings.** Include estimated expenses for travel to Kearney, NE for both annual technical assistance meetings. The Project Director and person responsible for reporting on the project *must* attend these meetings...” Therefore, you should budget for travel costs from your home city to Kearney, NE.

Question 9

Does the 2-page limit on the Project Abstract include Form B? The instructions ask for collaborators, but the form doesn't have a space to include them unless we put them in the project summary.

Answer 9

Yes. The Project Abstract includes Form B. There should be room for the piece on collaborators on the second page of the form.

Question 10

We are applying for the Minority Health Initiative Project for the Counties of Knox and Cherry. How do we write for different goals and objectives for each county? Do we submit a work plan for each or should it be combined into one?

Answer 10

We would prefer you submit one work plan. You can designate to which county each goal or objective applies by adding the name of that county to the appropriate cell (e.g., Custer County Goal One).

Question 11

If one agency is applying for funding in two different Counties but plan to use same staff and interrelated goals and objectives is it possible to combine it to one grant or must they be two separate applications?

Answer 11

You may do one work plan. Simply add the county name to the goal or objective. See the response to Question 6. The budgets must be submitted separately, however.

Question 12

If applying for multiple counties, should an application for each county be submitted separately? If the 2 or more counties can be combined on their forms, can a narrative for each county be submitted?

Answer 12

Please see the responses to questions 10 and 11. We prefer that one application is submitted per agency. You can designate in the narrative to which county each section applies.

Question 13

Is the lay health ambassador program you have at the State level evidence-based? If so, where can we find more detailed information regarding that evidence-based program?

Answer 13

Yes. The Lay Health Ambassador work is based on the *Promotora* model, which is evidence-based. Other terms used in the literature include Community Health Workers (CHWs).

Question 14

Under funding conditions, #4. "Preference will be given to projects that include community health workers or lay health ambassadors, include local community and cultural centers as substantive partners and support or address the priorities the DHHS OHDHE strategic plan." Please define community health worker and lay health ambassador in terms of a) training and b) scope of work.

Answer 14

Community health workers (CHWs) work under various titles throughout our state and the nation. In Nebraska, we have used a number of titles for CHWs including outreach workers, Lay Health Ambassadors (LHAs), *promotoras*, and others. Although no single training has been adopted nationally or in the state, there are programs that have been developed by various state and local organizations in Nebraska to address training needs for individuals working as CHWs, LHAs, etc. The Office of Health Disparities and Health Equity, along with other stakeholders, is currently involved in an effort to move Nebraska toward a standard system for CHWs that includes a set of core competencies. As we work to develop that standard system, training for CHWs, LHAs, etc. should include a basic understanding of public health, CHW roles and responsibilities, health, and training based on the specific needs of your program. Sources for additional information on CHWs include the Health Resources and Services Administration Community Health Workers Evidence-based Models Toolbox and the American Public Health Association CHW section. Projects that incorporate these workers should include funding in their proposal to develop or enhance the skills of CHWs, LHAs, or other outreach workers.

The scope of work for a CHW or LHA will vary to some extent, but may include health education, outreach, and community education. They will need familiarity with state and local resources. They should have significant understanding of and relationships with and within the community to be served, and may serve as liaisons between the public health system and the community. Their goals are to facilitate access to service and improve the quality and cultural competency of service delivery and the related systems.

Question 15

Why do we need to link project outcomes to *Healthy People 2020* and the National Partnership for Action?

Answer 15

We need to start demonstrating that the Minority Health Initiative projects are making an impact, based on common indicators and measures. The linkages will assist us to align with those common pieces.

Question 16

Page 6: Use of Funds: “Applicants are required to use an external evaluator and to set aside 10% of the total budget to pay for the evaluation of the project. Funding may be used to subcontract evaluation or other services of the project.”

Question for clarification: The term “external evaluator” – does it mean the evaluator may not be a) a staff member of the applicant organization nor b) staff of any partner agency/organization, nor c) any staff member of the OHDHE?

Answer 16

Yes. The external evaluator may not be a member of the applicant organization, staff of any partner organization, nor OHDHE staff.

Question 17

Would you please define “external evaluator?” What criteria do the external evaluators need to meet?

Answer 17

External evaluators should meet the following qualifications:

- 3 to 5 years of experience as an evaluator of community-based programs
- Experience as a public health program evaluator and/or other community-based programs preferred
- Good interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills
- Experience with SPSS, SAS, or other statistical software and have at least mid-level statistical analytical skills
- Ability to travel within Nebraska
- Master’s degree or greater preferred

Evaluation plans will need to be implemented in the following levels:

- Social, economic, and environmental conditions that need improving
- Practices used to improve conditions
- Knowledge to be increased, attitudes to be modified, skills to be improved, and aspirations to be raised
- Participant reactions
- Participant in the program
- Activities used to target the population
- Resources used to implement the program

For more information, please see Rockwell, K., & Bennett, C. (2004). Targeting outcomes of programs: A hierarchy for targeting outcomes and evaluating their achievement. *Faculty*

Publications: Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication Department. Paper 48. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/aglifacpub/48>

Question 18

The RFA states on page 6, “Applicants are required to use an external evaluator and to set aside 10% of the total budget to pay for evaluation of the project.” The question is, can this requirement be amended or withdrawn, for those entities receiving a small amount of grant funding, say <\$30,000/2 yrs, if the grantee has an approved internal evaluation process as a part of their organization's documented internal Quality Improvement Plan?

Justification: Our concern is that our service area is eligible for only a small amount of funding to address a large number of needs in our minority communities. If we set aside 10% to pay for an outside evaluator, it makes a rather significant dent in the budget leaving markedly less financial resources to address the needs of the people we serve. While we recognize the importance of an external evaluator both as a part of the quality assurance process and, for accountability purposes when dealing with large allocations of public funds, the impact of that external evaluator is disproportionately lessened when working with small grant awards. This policy is detrimental to those of us who need every available dollar and cent for serving the people.

Answer 18

No. If a project struggles to find an evaluator willing to work with such a small project (dollar-wise), please contact your Office of Health Disparities and Health Equity Project Officer for assistance.

Question 19

We are clearly in favor of strong evaluation built into all of our projects. However, we do have some concern for the 10% that needs to go to evaluation on top of the 8% decrease in funding.

Realistically, this is a 15% reduction in funding for interventions. We know that as we build our program work plan, we are required to list processes and expected outcomes that should result in a large share of the evaluation process being complete at time of grant submission. Is there a way to negotiate this evaluation piece to a lower percentage?

Just to clarify: If we ask for the full amount for the 6 counties we are covering- evaluation would be \$60,102 for the two year period- This seems to be rather high, given our capacity for setting up evaluation measures in the grant application process.

Answer 19

The Request for Applications requires that all applications include a set aside of 10% for external project evaluation, so that will be part of the application scoring criteria.